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THE BAPTIST

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JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Baptist Musgrove sworn in as governor

Before Ronnie Musgrove came to Jackson January 11 to take the oath of office as Mississippi's first Southern Baptist governor in 20 years, his home church made sure they sent him away with their blessings and prayers.

Alan Kilgore, pastor of First Church, Batesville, said about 600 people attended the special commitment service January 9 in the church's sanctuary. The 30-minute service was held immediately after the regular morning worship hour.

"Our first intent was to share Christ with everyone through our regular worship service —

there were four to six additions to the church that day — and then have the commitment service for the Governor," Kilgore pointed out.

Deacon chairman Gary Wray delivered a charge to Musgrove on behalf of the deacons and the church congregation, that "we will pray for you and encourage the church to pray for you," Kilgore said.

Deacon David Ball also delivered a personal charge of commitment to Musgrove, Kilgore said.

Each active deacon and ordained church staffer participated in a laying on of hands and time of prayer for Musgrove. Kilgore then presented each family member — Musgrove, his wife Melanie, son Jordan, and daughter Carmen Rae — with a Bible on behalf of the church.

The Musgroves were invited to stand with the new additions at the front of the church as the service ended. Virtually everyone in the sanctuary filed by to welcome the new members and wish the Musgroves well, Kilgore said.

Musgrove, a Democrat and an attorney, served one four-year term as the state's lieutenant governor, beginning in 1996. Prior to that, he was a member of the Mississippi Senate for eight years.

Musgrove is the second member of First Church, Batesville, to serve as governor. The late Cliff Finch, Mississippi's governor from 1976-80, was an active member of the church and his

widow Zelma is a member, Kilgore observed.

Musgrove is a regular in the church's adult choir, and was chairman of the pastor search committee that called Kilgore to the Batesville Church in 1994. "He's served on every committee this church has," said Kilgore.

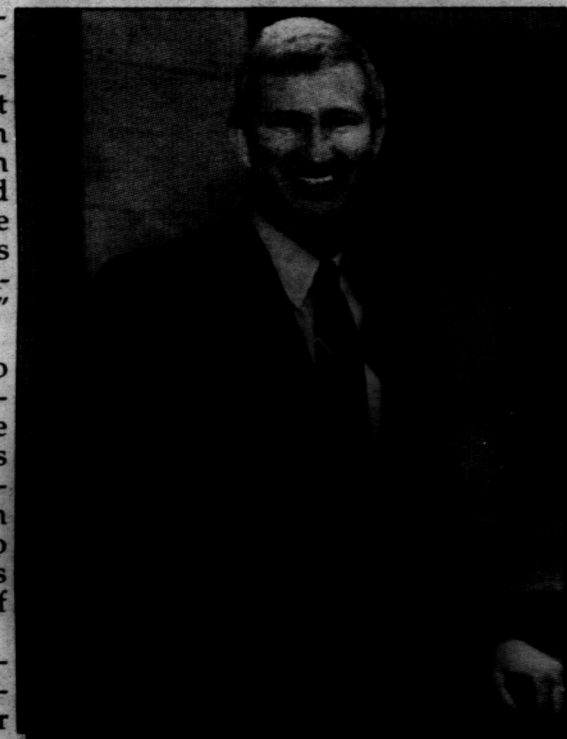
Less than two weeks before his inauguration, Musgrove was still serving his appointed stint as deacon of the week, which meant he had to ensure the church was secure at the end of each service.

"It was really interesting to see the soon-to-be governor of our state going around the church cutting off lights and locking doors, but that's the kind of man he is," Kilgore said.

"I know where his heart is. I know he loves the Lord, and I know he's a family man. Other than his relationship with the Lord, his family always takes first place," he said.

Kilgore has a firm opinion on Musgrove's gubernatorial potential.

"He will be even-tempered. There have been situations in the church that could have gotten out of hand, except for his leadership and calming presence. He has the ability to diffuse squabbles," Kilgore observed.



Musgrove

To people who would question the new governor's political affiliations or criticize him for disagreeing with them, Kilgore pleads for time and fairness.

"People will see Governor Musgrove for the spiritual man that he is, and for the wisdom he possesses. He backs up what he says with the life he leads."

"Our state is in good hands. Give him a chance and he'll show you."

"I am proud to know Ronnie Musgrove, and I am proud to be his pastor. We should all pray for him, that God will use him as governor as mightily as he (God) has used him in his home church," Kilgore said.



BLESSINGS — Ronnie Musgrove (kneeling), Mississippi's governor-elect at the time, receives a laying on of hands Jan. 9 from Alan Kilgore, pastor of Musgrove's home church, First Church, Batesville, during a special commitment service in the church's sanctuary. Looking on are (from left) Musgrove's son Jordan, daughter Carmen Rae, and wife Melanie. (BR special photo by Jake Thompson)

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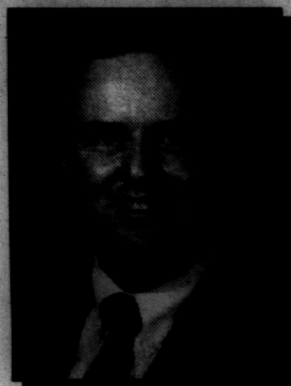
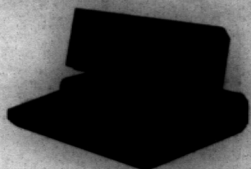
Miss. CP sets record

Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) receipts for the month of December 1999 reflected an increase of nearly \$200,000 over receipts for the same month in the previous year, putting the 1999 CP budget toward a new record.

SBC CP sees big jump

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — December 1999 totals for the SBC Cooperative Program (CP) Allocation Budget year were up by more than \$2,561,945.65 over the previous year, according to Michael Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC CP Allocation Committee.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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An unfortunate legacy

Dear Governor Fordice:

Well, your eight years as governor of the State of Mississippi came to an end with the swearing-in of your successor, Ronnie Musgrove, at noon on January 11. Whatever else friend or foe may say about your service as Mississippi's first two-term governor, they can all agree that it wasn't dull.

For me, one of the salient memories of your time in the public spotlight occurred on that cool November evening in 1992 when it became apparent that the state's voters had just chosen you as their next governor.

Wild cheers greeted you as you strode into the packed room where the victory party was being held. Well-wishers crowded to be near you as television cameras jostled for position. The atmosphere was electric.

All eyes were upon you. This was your time. You were about to become the most important and powerful man in Mississippi, the capstone to a highly successful career as a businessman.

In the white-hot excitement of your upset win over an incumbent governor, you could have chosen to say anything you wanted. You could have done anything you wanted.

What you did was calm down the boisterous crowd and call for the people of the state to join you in... prayer.

As satellites bounced the live television signal to every corner of the state, you prayed. Hundreds of thousands of Mississippians witnessed you asking God for divine guidance to lead our beloved state.

Watching from a Memphis hotel room after a business meeting earlier that day, I remember how impressed I was that this man who had just grabbed the brass ring, who was about to be admired and criticized and fawned upon for the next four years, would begin such a difficult journey with prayer.

I was proud to be a Mississippian. I had hope that one person could make a difference, that for once a spiritual man in the

decidedly unspiritual world of politics could be a role model to encourage aspiring Christians to run for office.

That was then. This is now.

As you were introduced to the polite applause of the crowd gathered January 11 at the Capitol in Jackson for the inauguration of your successor, my mind couldn't help but flash to the widely-published photograph of you and your girlfriend stepping off the airplane at the Memphis airport after a secret trip together to France.

When you were finally forced to admit that you were leaving the wife of your youth for another woman, the news hit me hard. Once again, a vaunted public figure's walk didn't match his talk. Once again, a role model deeply disappointed us.

Worst of all was the father who told me of the troubled look he encountered on his ten-year-old daughter's face when she turned from the television news and asked, "Daddy, are you going to forget about Mommy and go to Paris with another girl?"

At her tender age, your very public indiscretion has given her a distinct impression of what it means to be a man. It may take years to undo that impression, if ever.

One can never know how many young minds you have affected. Was it worth it? Apparently you think so, having announced your plans to marry your girlfriend only a few days after your divorce becomes final in February.

It has been said that your administration accomplished much over the past eight years — in economic development and welfare reform, to name a couple of areas — and that were you at least partly responsible for the material prosperity we

currently enjoy in Mississippi.

However, to liberally paraphrase Marc Antony as he planned the funeral elegy for his assassinated leader in William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar:

The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones.

Sadly, so it is with your unfortunate legacy. I, for one, truly wish it had turned out differently.



GUEST OPINION:



The rumors that will not die!

By Greg Bowers, pastor
First Church, Indianola

The rumor further alleges that the symbol found on all Procter and Gamble packaging is some sort of Satanic symbol. That rumor is simply not true, although it continues to be perpetuated by millions of well meaning Christians.

In fact, Procter and Gamble is aggressively pursuing legal action against those who keep this rumor afloat. For additional information, you can access the company's website at www.pg.com/rumor/.

The second rumor has to do with the late Madalyn Murray O'Hair. For 25 years, the rumor alleged that she had filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission

(FCC) endeavoring to remove all religious broadcasting from the television and radio airwaves.

The latest twist on the rumor is that she is attempting to shut down the hit television show Touched by an Angel because of its occasional references to God.

For the record, Madalyn Murray O'Hair is dead. She disappeared from her Austin, Texas, home several years ago and a man has been charged with her murder.

It is true that a petition was filed with the FCC in 1971 by Jeremy Lansman and Lorenzo Milam. They asked the FCC to review the operating licenses of all non-profit organizations, including religious ones.

On August 1, 1975, the FCC denied their petition, citing the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment requirement that government take "a stance of neutrality toward religion, acting neither to promote nor to inhibit religion."

Since then, it has been widely rumored that O'Hair sponsored the petition and that she has been granted a hearing with the FCC Board of Governors to discuss her complaint. That simply is not the case.

In spite of numerous efforts at explanation and information, over four million petitions have signed and sent to the FCC.

As with the Procter and Gamble rumor, those who wish to review the case more fully can access the FCC web site at www.fcc.gov/mmb/enf/forms/rm-2493.html.

Our reputation is on the line! When we perpetuate these rumors, we look misinformed at best and uninformed at worst.

Let's spend our time perpetuating those things which we know are true, namely that Jesus Christ is risen, reigning, and returning!

NAMB introduces teen mission magazine

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)— "Go!" The one-word summation of the Great Commission is also the name of the North American Mission Board's (NAMB's) newest magazine, designed for students who share a passion for seeing people around them discover Christ.

Go! magazine, subtitled "Taking Christ to Our World," debuted at YouthLink 2000, the Southern Baptist, seven-city millennial youth event slated for Dec. 29-31.

"Some people think that the best you can do is get through your teen years without messing up your life,"

said Nate Adams, NAMB's vice president for mobilization and mission education.

"Go! happens to think that faithful teens who are taking Christ to the world can change that world forever," he said.

The magazine was developed as part of NAMB's ongoing

circulation of about 280,000.

"There is an awakening, an

"A h a ! moment that happens when Christians discover that they can be involved in leading people to Christ," Adams said, "and that's what we want for teenagers. They don't have to do it the same way their parents do it, their pastor does it or their friends do it, but we want them to find that if their faith is real and valuable, they can discover their unique way to share their faith, to give it away."

The first issue of Go!, for instance, gives stu-

dents a glimpse of those around them who desperately need Christ.

Six non-Christian high school students were interviewed about their own backgrounds and religious beliefs, as well as how they perceive Christianity and the Christian students at their school.

"By [listening] we can begin to discover how our friends feel about God, faith, and Christianity," the introduction to the article reads. "And as we hear them out, we can find ways to address their real questions and concerns."

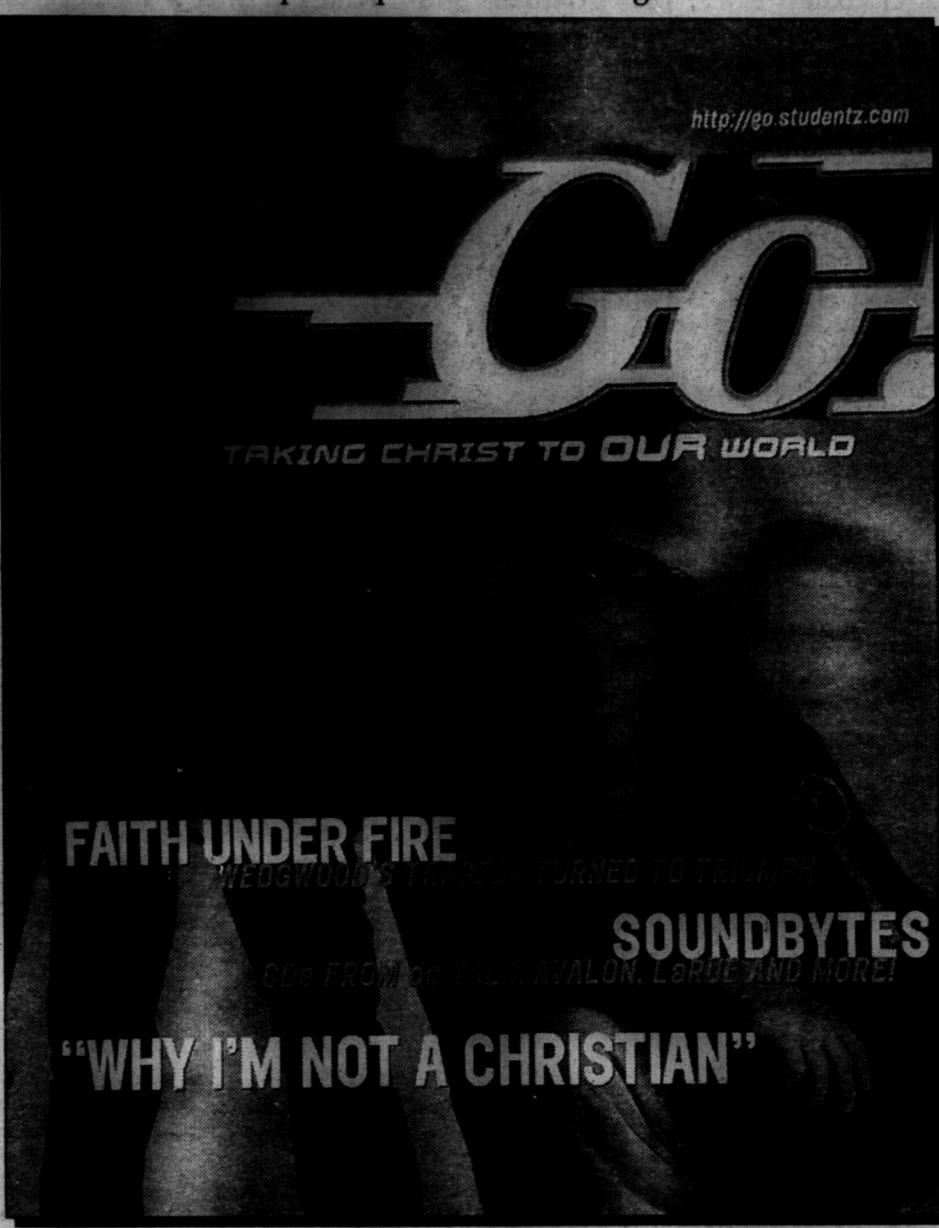
Another article features the youth group at Vanguard, a non-traditional Southern

Baptist Church in Colorado Springs, Colo. The ministry creates an environment in which youth and their leaders lounge on "beat-up couches" talking about tough issues of the day.

Most importantly, non-Christian youth feel comfortable. The message: You, too, can find ways of making your youth group more effective in reaching and sharing Christ.

Go! magazine will be published six times a year, via paid subscription. The premiere issue will be sent free to youth leaders and others.

Bulk subscriptions also will be available. Churches and individuals may subscribe to Go! by calling NAMB at (770) 410-6250.



Clinton spokesman apologies

WASHINGTON (BP) — White House spokesman Joe Lockhart admitted Jan. 5 that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) deserved an apology for comments he made accusing the SBC of "perpetrating ancient religious hatred."

"I think an apology is in order," Lockhart said, responding to a reporter's inquiry about the issue, "and I've already made it. Several reporters called me at the time. This was a comment that I made to a question that I... wasn't aware of the facts, and made a generalized statement that is missing some conditional words."

The apology comes just one day after Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, a Southern Baptist, told Baptist Press that the president should direct Lockhart to make a public apology.

On Dec. 16, Lockhart likened Southern Baptist evangelism efforts to Muslims and Jews to "perpetrating religious hatred." Lockhart's original comments brought strong rebukes from congressional leadership as well as Southern Baptist Convention leaders. His remarks were made following a reporter's question about plans for a Chicago evangelism initiative by the SBC.

"As I explained to the reporters who called me right before Christmas, and I think I made very clear, that certainly my intentions were not to create the impression that was created," Lockhart said. "And even more, I didn't want to create the impression that this was the President's belief, because it's certainly not his, and it's not mine."

Lockhart's strong criticism of the Southern Baptist Convention brought swift response from SBC leaders as well as congressional leadership.

In a Dec. 23 letter to the White House, House members J.C. Watts and J. D. Hayworth, both Southern Baptists, condemned Lockhart's remarks and called for his resignation.



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE



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Md./Del.
restructures
mission board

TOWSON, Md. (BP) — Messengers to the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware (BCM/D) affirmed a restructuring of the convention's General Mission Board.

Mississippi Baptists are currently involved in a three-year partnership missions project with BCM/D.

The restructuring alters the mission board's committee structure, replacing standing committees with ad hoc committees. This allows those BCM/D strategic teams to carry the work of the convention and relate directly to the General Mission Board, officials said.

Looking back

10 years ago

Dellanna W. O'Brien is installed as the sixth executive director of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). In her first address to the WMU executive board, O'Brien says, "The mission for the '90s is 'Go.' Our charge is clear... All that remains is to obey the command."

20 years ago

R. Keith Parks assumes his role as the new executive director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board after a four-month transition. Parks challenges those gathered for the occasion to never let any other issues cloud the basic issue of telling people about Jesus.

50 years ago

Blythe Creek Church, Choctaw County, completes a new building with an auditorium, 10 classrooms, and butane gas heat. Nathan Pulling, a Clarke College student, is pastor. The church meets two Sundays each month.

Scholarship set for MC founder Whitfield

CLINTON, MS (Special) — Historic Provine Chapel on the Mississippi College (MC) campus in Clinton was the site of the announcement of a new scholarship in the name of a pioneer in Mississippi Baptist life and one of the founders of MC.

The \$100,000 donation was made by G. Baley Price and his wife, Cora Lee Beers Price of Lawrence, Kan., both great-great grandchildren of Benjamin Whitfield.

"This is a red letter day for Mississippi College," said MC president Howell Todd. "It is doubtful that MC would exist today had it not been for Benjamin Whitfield's leadership at a very critical time in the history of the college," Todd added.

"Benjamin Whitfield was known for his absolute honesty and high sense of duty," said G. Baley Price, MC graduate and retired University of Kansas mathematics professor. "He is a man worthy of being a role model to people today."

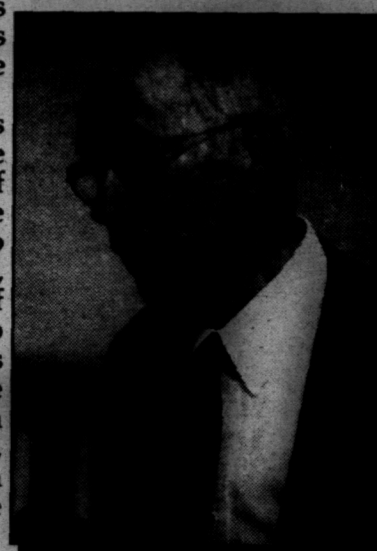
The announcement was timed to correspond with the 200th anniversary of Whitfield's birth in Wayne County, N.C. It was also made in Provine Chapel, which stands as a symbol of Whitfield's contribution to Baptists and MC. He was chairman of the committee that secured the \$30,000 in donations to build the chapel, which the college shared with what would one day become First Church of Clinton.

Whitfield was instrumental in the establishment of Union Church in Hinds County, which today is known as Pocahontas Church. He was also among the leaders to organize the Mississippi

Baptist Convention in December 1836. When MC became available to the Baptists in 1850, Whitfield was a member of the board of trustees. He served as chairman of the board from 1850-1854, and from 1860 until his death in 1872.

The Benjamin Whitfield scholarship will be awarded for the first time in the fall of 2000. The scholarship will be awarded to a student with a record of excellence in academics, outstanding service to the community and the church, as well as integrity, absolute honesty, high moral character, dependability, and devotion to duty.

For more information on the Benjamin Whitfield Scholarship Fund or to establish a scholarship fund, contact Danny Rutland at (601) 925-3256. For information on applying for scholarships at MC, contact Jim Turcotte at (601) 925-3315.



Price



NEW SCHOLARSHIP — On hand for the establishment of the Benjamin Whitfield Scholarship at Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton were (from left) Harry Vickery, MC board chairman; Howell W. Todd, MC president; G. Baley Price and Whitfield Price, great-great grandsons of Benjamin Whitfield; Kermit McGregor, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention; and Steve Jordan, pastor of Pocahontas Church, Metro Association. (BR special photo)

Benjamin Whitfield, pioneer: man of honor and honesty

Benjamin Whitfield, a pioneer leader in Mississippi Baptist life and a founder of Mississippi College, was a man of impeccable honesty, according to his great, great grandson, G. Baley Price.

At the announcement of a scholarship fund in Whitfield's name, Price told a story about his great, great grandfather's honesty and its consequences.

"In those early days a group of prominent citizens endorsed a note to finance a railroad venture," Price said. Whitfield was among those citizens, and when it failed, he found himself with a \$100,000 debt.

"A legal solution was available, so Benjamin Whitfield got a lawyer and went to court. But when he heard his lawyer say 'nil debit', he jumped to his feet, and said 'I do owe this money and requested my lawyer to arrange with the bank for the time to pay it back.'"

Even though the cry of "nil debit," which means "I owe nothing," was just a formality, Whitfield would not allow those words to be used. It was for Whitfield a question of honor and honesty. As a result, the judge ordered the lawyers to arrange a verdict to satisfy Whitfield's high sense of honor.

"He paid the debt off in 20 years time," Price said.

That is not the end of the story, however. Price told of how years later a young fellow walked into Capitol State Bank of Jackson in search of a job. When the lad told the bank president his name, "Benjamin Whitfield Griffith," the bank president asked if the lad were kin to "old Mr. Benjamin Whitfield."

When the answer was affirmative, the bank president is reported to have said, "come in here; we will make a place for his grandson."

"This grandson later was chairman of the board of trustees at MC, and he signed my diploma in 1925," Price said.

From a history of the Whitfield family written by Emma Whitfield, granddaughter of Benjamin Whitfield.

C.E. Bryant dies at 82

BELLEVILLE, Ill. (BP) — C.E. Bryant, the first director of Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention's news service, died Jan. 7 in Belleville, Ill. He had been hospitalized for 10 days with the flu and pneumonia, according to a family friend. Bryant was 82.

W.C. Fields, vice president for public relations and director of Baptist Press from 1959-87 and editor of The Baptist Record from 1956-59, said Bryant "was a man of great talent, but it expressed itself in service. He was one of the finest journalists that Southern Baptists have had over these many years."

Graham: Christians should not 'target' groups

NEW YORK (ABP) — Targeting Muslims and Jews for conversion is not the approach Billy Graham would take to Christian evangelism, he said in a nationally televised interview Jan. 2.

Graham, appearing on Fox News Sunday, was interviewed by Tony Snow about a variety of topics, ranging from his view of the new millennium to how he has fended off temptation as a highly public figure.

Snow referenced the recent controversy between Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders and religious leaders in Chicago over a plan to send thousands of Southern Baptists into Chicago, some of whom will seek to convert adherents of other religions.

"Is that the sort of thing the Baptist convention should be doing?" Snow asked.

Graham said: "I'm a Southern Baptist, and I normally defend my denomination. I'm loyal to it. I believe in them. They have some of the finest people in the

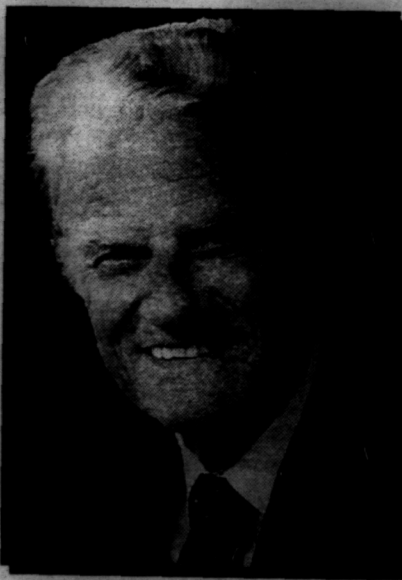
world in our denomination, but I have never targeted Muslims. I have never targeted Jews. I believe that we should declare the fact that God loves you, God's willing to forgive you, God can change you, and Christ and his kingdom is open to anybody who repents and by faith receives him as Lord and Savior."

The issue of Southern Baptists seeking to convert groups like Muslims, Jews, and Hindus has made headlines around the world in recent months, sparked first by release of an SBC prayer guide for Jewish conversion during that religion's High Holy Days. A similar controversy erupted later when the SBC issued a prayer guide for

the conversion of Hindus.

Also during the Fox interview, Graham said he believes Christians often are too quick to judge others they think are sinners.

"I think we should love them and welcome them and open our arms to them, and then we don't totally accept them into our fellowship as believers and as Christians until they have repented their sins and changed their way of living," Graham said, "but as far as



Graham

day-to-day friendship and being together at various functions, I don't believe there should be any difference at all. I have many friends that don't

claim to be followers of Christ."

Graham said while many regard him a saint, he doesn't see himself that way.

"I'm not a righteous man," he said. "People put me up on a pedestal (on which) I don't belong in my personal life, and they think I'm better than I am. ... I'm not a Mother Teresa, and I feel that very much."

Graham lauded a response during a recent presidential debate, when Texas Gov. George W. Bush named Jesus Christ as his favorite political philosopher or thinker.

"From my point of view, it was a wonderful answer," Graham said. "I mean, to millions of young people especially in the United States, Jesus Christ is the greatest man... in the history of the world, and to me, he's the greatest person in the history of mankind and the universe. We can't prove it. I can't put it in a test tube or in an astronomical formula. But by faith I believe it because the Bible teaches it."

LifeWay puts music resources on Internet

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention is making keyboard and instrumental music available as downloadable resources from the Internet at www.lifeway.com/musicministries.

The move is a first for the agency in providing for-sale resources instantaneously, and LifeWay is believed to be the first major denominational publisher to employ technology to provide downloadable music.

Initially all music offered will be audio of selected instrumental music and keyboard titles from LifeWay's Genevox Music and Church Street Music.

According to Danny Jones, leadership development team leader for LifeWay Music Ministries, music will be offered in MP3 (audio) format.

In early 2000, PDF for Adobe Acrobat (print) versions will be added. Keyboard print music will be sold for one dollar for each instrument required (solo, duet, and so forth). Instrumental series will be sold for actual retail price. Some audio selections are available at no charge.

The great appeal for this service will be the ability to have resources immediately, rather than waiting for a shipped order.

Choral print music, with both MP3 (sound) and PDF (print), will be added later, along with resources from other publishing imprints.

A link to download a free player for the audio selections is provided on the site. "This is the first in many enhancements anticipated in the future for LifeWay's Web site," according to Darin Moore, Internet applications manager for LifeWay.

The new feature is part of a larger music ministries site under development that is expected to include sub-sites for Dovetail Music, Made for Praise, Genevox Music, Church Street Music, Church Street Press, the Children's Music Series, and hymnals and other resources. In all, nearly 3,000 music ministry and worship/congregational resources will be in the online music catalog.

In other areas, LifeWay's Web site at www.lifeway.com includes:

- The ability to order both dated and undated products 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since online ordering of dated and undated materials was made available two years ago, almost 100,000 orders have been placed on the Internet.

- Secure ordering by the use of a Personal Identification Number, eliminating the need to provide confidential account information online. More than 14,000 churches have Personal Identification Numbers to use for ordering their materials.

- Response with an email acknowledging receipt of the order.

- Easy way to review what has been ordered in the past.

- Offers the ability to check on the status of an order and its shipment.

Self leads prayer service



Bob Self, retired pastor of First Church, Brookhaven, and former pastor of First Church, Batesville, presides over the January 11 prayer service for Ronnie Musgrove and his family prior to Musgrove's swearing-in as Mississippi's first Southern Baptist governor in 20 years. Self served as Musgrove's pastor for several years at the Batesville church. Behind Self is the Mississippi Mass Choir, which performed at the prayer service. For more information, see article on page one. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

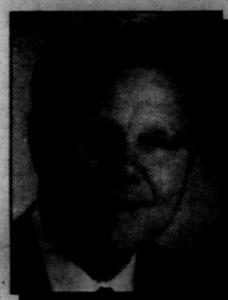
How's My DRIVING?

Several years ago some trucking companies, and now various other companies that have vehicles on the road, put signs on the backs of their vehicles asking the question, "How's my driving?" You don't have to travel down a road very far before you spot one. Just below the question, "How's my driving?" is a 1-800 number to call and respond. Have you ever called one of those numbers? I confess that I have not, even though I have witnessed both reckless driving as well as courteous and thoughtful driving. I have thought about calling, but never followed through.

The fact is that many people do call — both commending and criticizing the drivers on which they are reporting. Some companies have revealed that they have taken action against some of their drivers because they had received so many complaints. Others say that regardless of how many calls, good or bad that come in, their drivers are on notice that people are watching.

I wonder what would happen if church people had a sign hung across their backs that said: "How's my Christianity? Call 1-800-Heaven." What kind of record would we have? It might not be a bad idea because the real test of Christianity is not how still you sit in the pew on Sunday morning, or how meaningful you absorb the songs and sermon, but what kind of life and light you reflect on the highways of life.

Recently I went to lunch with a fellow minister. We sat down in a restaurant and the waitress who came to our table



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

was noticeably nervous and anxious. With an uncertainty in her voice she said, "I hope you are nice people because this is my first day." We assured her that we would be nice and that she would not be "shot at sundown" if everything wasn't perfect. She was relieved and went on to do an excellent job. I guess she thought of herself as being on trial, yet I was reminded that we are the ones whose testimony is always on trial.

You remember that famous story Jesus told about a man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves? Beaten, stripped of everything, and left dying on the side of the road, people began to pass by. A priest and a Levite, both of them away from their religious environment, encountered the man but had apparently left their religion back at the place where they worshipped. They were aware of the man's needs, but they just decided to pass on by. Finally, a Samaritan happened to come down that road. Of all people he probably had the best reason not to help and yet he went out of his way, expended his energy and his own resources to help the guy, then went on his way. I would imagine that the poor guy who had been beaten and robbed probably would have taken the time to call 1-800 to tell of the

blessed thing that had been done for him if that had been an option.

Some years ago I was driving down the interstate highway when something caught my eye in the rearview mirror — it was smoke. It took me a few seconds to realize that the smoke was coming from my car! As quickly as I could, I pulled to the side and stopped. By this time smoke was coming out from under and all around my car. I knelt down, looked under the car and saw a growing pool of fire. The transmission housing had cracked and the transmission fluid was dripping onto the ground and was on fire. I could just see the fire growing, the gas tank exploding, and the car being destroyed!

Trying to avoid total destruction, I jumped back into the car, put it in neutral, and then began to push the car away from the growing fire pool. While all of this was taking place over the period of a few minutes, I began to be aware of how many cars were passing me by — not one, not five, but dozens. Many of them slowed down to look and most of them moved over into the far lane away from any possible fire hazard. I must confess that the majority of them did put on their brakes, slowing down to 65-70 mph, but just so they could get a better look. Not one stopped!

After the fire was out and the car was safe, I sat on the side of the road with my flasher-lights blinking and I began counting and contemplating those who were passing me by. I wondered where all these people were going in such a hurry. I wondered how many of them were Baptists. I wondered how many of them were Christians. I wondered how many of them cared, but either because they did not have the time or knew nothing about auto mechanics, just simply passed on by?

I was in a dilemma. After spending a considerable amount of time trying to figure out what to do, I finally stopped counting and even stopped wondering. I just waited and eventually a man came along in a vehicle and pulled up directly behind me. It was not just "a" vehicle, it was a wrecker! Not only was it a wrecker, but the man was on his way to a dealership to pick up a car (the same make as mine) that he was to transport to another city. "I'll be glad to pull your car in," he said. He hooked up my car, I got in the cab with him, and off we went. We arrived at the dealership, the mechanics got right on my car, fixed it, and within hours I was on my way.

I tried to pay my "Good Samaritan" who stopped with the wrecker, but "No," he said, "I was coming here anyway." "Yeh, but you didn't have to stop and help me." With a smile he said, "Well, yes I did." His smile was because of the conversation we had had earlier. "Yes," he was a Christian, and a Baptist, and in a hurry, but not so big a hurry that he couldn't stop and help!

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Bivocational workers gather in Birmingham

By Don Windham, pastor
Ted Church, Bay Springs

The National Bivocational Advisory Council met at the Clarion Hotel in Birmingham to plan bivocational approaches required to meet the goal of 100,000 Southern Baptist Churches by the year 2020.

Mississippi was represented by Dale Holloway and Ken Cook from the state Bivocational Council; Jimmy and Ashley McCaleb, who work with the state convention as music consultants; and Don and Betty Windham, editors of the bivocational newsletter Tent Makers.

The major thrust of the meeting was the direction of bivocationalism.

Bivocationalism is defined as church and denominational activities conducted by God-called people who obtain some

part of their wages or personal income from sources other than the church position they fill.

Several proposals were discussed, in addition to addressing the identity problem associated with bivocationalism.

Frontier mission personnel assume bivocationalism is the answer to their needs.

Baptist colleges in Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, Oklahoma, North Carolina, and Virginia are in varied stages of offering an intentional

bivocational curriculum.

These states also have a Bivocational Advisory Council and a newsletter.

Several seminaries offer the bivocational options, but the consensus of the council was that it is too late, excepting the associate degree programs.

It should be done during the student's undergraduate days, as this would enable the student to practice his secular vocation as he attends graduate school.

In general the national council was reorganized to enhance the Southern Baptist Convention program goal, to continue support of the state councils, and to encourage exchanges of information, training materials, and even personnel with each other.

The desire for prayer is great, but it is requested we pray that God's work be done, and that we will be ready to do it when and wherever we see a need.

Mississippian selected to lead Tenn. college

JEFFERSON CITY, Tenn. (BP) — Samford University Provost James S. Netherton, a Mississippi native, was unanimously elected Dec. 2 as the 21st president of Carson-Newman College.

The action ends a 10-month

search to find a successor to Cordell Maddox, who has led the Baptist-related college in Jefferson City, Tenn., since 1977. Maddox will continue in his presidential role until Netherton, 52, assumes his new position Feb. 1.

Netherton was raised as a Baptist and participated in the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at the University of Mississippi, where he earned his undergraduate degree in mathematics. He served as chairman of the BSU's student summer missions program there. Since then he has served in numerous church roles, including various committee positions as well as deacon, Sunday School teacher, Bible drill leader, and choir director.

A native of Jackson, Netherton earned a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Virginia in 1973. He and his wife are members of Birmingham's Brookwood Church.

During a news conference following his selection, Netherton stressed that he wants a positive relationship with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The GAs from Skene Church, Skene, had a time of learning about customs and the culture of Kenya. They dressed up in authentic Kenyan outfits. The girls pictured (from left) are Kyle Haney, Brittany Mann, Anne-Marie Pevey, Elizabeth Weeks, Raven Holder, and Anna-Claire Bowen, guest.

Heaven's Gates and Hell's Flames will be pre-

sented at Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, Feb. 6-8, at 7 p.m. each evening. Admission is free. For ticket information and group reservations, call the church office at (601) 892-1121.

The Melody Boys Quartet of Little Rock, Ark., will be in concert at First Church, Crystal Springs, on Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. Call (601) 892-1149 for more information.

MBREA
to meet

The MBREA Convention 2000 will be held on Jan. 28-30 at the Holiday Inn in Vicksburg. Send registration fee of \$35 to David Rogers, 129 Fairfield Dr., Hattiesburg, MS 39402.



GAs of Skene Church, Skene

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Tickets may also be purchased by contacting North Greenwood Baptist Church, (662) 453-2801.

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First Church, Ridgeland, held deacon ordination services on Dec. 19 for (pictured, from left) Eric Jacobsen, Bob Malone, Keith Allison, and Kevin Baker. Les Hughes is interim pastor. Phil Ayers is chairman of deacons.

Ordination service at First Church, Ridgeland

Timothy R. Mowdy was licensed to the ministry by Poplar Springs Church, Newton Association, on Dec. 12. He is available for pulpit supply and can be contacted at 116 Poplar

Springs Rd., Newton, MS 39345, or phone (601) 683-7436. Charles Bonner, left, pastor of Poplar Springs Church is pictured presenting a Certificate of License to Mowdy.

First Church, Plantersville, recently presented Sunday School perfect attendance pins to Noah Duvall (25 years) and Jewel Duvall (23 years). Steve Wilemon is director of Sunday School. Samuel Hamilton is pastor.



The Duvalls



Bonner and Mowdy

Calvary Church, West Point, ordained Barry Bouchillon to the ministry on Nov. 14. Bouchillon has served Calvary Church as minister of music/education since Sept. 1. Martin Steelmon is pastor of Calvary Church.



Bouchillon

First Church, Sumrall, has called Jerry Lewis of Vicksburg as minister of youth. He is a graduate student at William Carey College.

Rudy James has resigned as pastor of Chapel Hill Church, Utica. He is available for supply and can be reached at (601) 829-1853.

STAFF CHANGES

Concord Church, Little Yazoo, Yazoo Association, has called James F. (Jim) Yates as pastor effective in December 1999. A native of Kentucky, Yates received his education at Union University, Jackson, Tenn., and Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky. Yates has served as interim pastor for the past 24 months at Concord Church.



Yates

Thomastown Church, Thomastown, has called Jack Gregory of Madison as pastor effective Jan. 2. A native of South Carolina, Gregory received his

education at Furman University, Greenville, S.C., and Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C. His previous place of service was Carey Chapel Church, Red Banks.

New Hope Church, Starkville, has called Eddie Painter as pastor effective Dec. 6. He had previously served as pastor of Harmony Church, Quitman.

First Church, Pontotoc, has called Ken Hester as pastor effective Jan. 1. A native of Clarksdale, Hester received his education at Mississippi State University, Southwestern Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas, and Beeson Divinity School in Samford University, Birmingham, Ala. His previous place of service was Mantee Church.



Hester

Revival date

Old Pearl Valley Church, Philadelphia: Jan. 30-Feb. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Clay Chancellor, evangelist; Mark McDonald, pastor.

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CMF member Bobby Douglas of First Baptist Church, Columbus

MC offering continuing ed courses

Courses offered by the office of continuing education at Mississippi College include Conversational Spanish, Feb. 1-29, Tuesday, 6-8:30 p.m.; basics of photography, Feb. 7-28, Monday, 6-7:30 p.m.; fitness training, Feb. 7-28, Monday, 6:30-8 p.m.; and a four week series designed to help individuals plan for personal investment, different topics each week, Feb. 8-29, Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. For additional information, call (601) 925-3301.

Blue Mountain College Baptist Student Union (BSU) will be sponsoring a concert by Christian artists, Sierra, on Jan. 25. The concert will be held in the Modena Lowrey Berry Auditorium on campus. For ticket information, contact the BSU at (662) 685-4771, extension 137.

An exhibit of nature photography by David F. Gruchy, former chairman of the Biology Department, William Carey College, will be on display in the Lucile Parker Gallery on the Hattiesburg campus. He will be honored with a reception Jan. 29 from 9-10:30 a.m. This exhibit will be on display through Feb. 11, and can be viewed during the regular gallery hours, 1-4 p.m., Mon.-Fri., or by appointment, call (601) 582-6193.

Miroslav Loncar, assistant professor of music and artist in residence at William Carey

College, will perform a Guitar Concert on Jan. 24 in the Lucile Parker Gallery. The concert will feature works by Croatian composer Mileic and original compositions by Loncar. The concert will also feature Latin American composers Ponce, Piazzolla, and Barrios. A native of Croatia, Loncar now resides in Hattiesburg. He has performed throughout Europe and the United States. His standard program includes work from Bach to contemporary Latin American composers. Loncar received both bachelor and master degrees from the Academy of Music in Graz, Austria, where he studied classical guitar. He received the doctor of musical arts degree from the University of

Southern Mississippi. For more information contact the music department at 582-6175.

Higher Education Appreciation Day/Working for Academic Excellence (HEADWAE) recently honored Allison Amanda Trammell and Howard Keever of William Carey College (WCC) during the Thirteenth Annual HEADWAE program. Trammell, a senior communication major from Florence, and Keever, a professor of music, received special recognition from the Mississippi Legislature as the student and faculty member at WCC. The HEADWAE observance was established in 1988 by legislative resolution to honor individual academic

achievement and the overall contribution by the state's public and private institutions of higher learning. Seventy-six outstanding students and faculty members from 38 Mississippi public and private universities and colleges received special recognition from the Mississippi legislature.

Registration for new and readmitted students entering William Carey College will be held Feb. 18 on the Hattiesburg campus. These students will begin the registration process in the Admissions Office located in Tatum Court. For more information about registration, contact the Admission Office at (601) 582-6103.

WCC homecoming set

William Carey College (WCC) will celebrate Homecoming Friday, Jan. 28 and Saturday, Jan. 29, on the Hattiesburg campus. A Symphonic Winds Concert will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday in the Dumas L. Smith Auditorium. General registration will be held Friday from 2 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. in the Bentley-Pope House.

Registration on Saturday will be 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. A series of presentations will begin at 3:30 p.m. in the Bentley-Pope House. Topics include "Your Investments: Strategies for Financial Planning in the New Millennium;" "Music Therapy Round Table;" and "Holy Land Digs." At 4:20 p.m. a second series of lectures will be presented including "The New Graduate Program in Counseling Psychology;" "The Joys of Travel;" and "The Vision for William Carey College Round Table." The Great Chili Cook-Off will begin at 5:30 p.m. in Crawford Hall. The annual Coffee House entertainment will begin at 7 p.m. in the Dumas Smith Auditorium. On Saturday, a 5K Walk/Run will begin at 9

a.m. with registration at 8:30 a.m. A Coffee Hour will be held in the Lucile Parker Gallery at 9 a.m. Memory Walks and Talks will begin at 9:45 a.m. followed by the Winters School of Music Showcase of Talent at 11 a.m. in the Dumas Smith Auditorium. The Awards Luncheon will be held at 12:30 p.m. in the Wilkes Dining Hall followed by the Lady Crusaders versus Louisiana College basketball game at 2:30 p.m. A Theatre and Forensics Open House in the O. L. Quave Theatre will be held at 2:30 p.m. The Crusaders will play the Wildcats at 4:30 p.m. The crowning of the 2000 Homecoming Queen will be held at half time. Class reunions will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by a barbecue supper.

For more information, contact the Alumni Office at (601) 582-6107, or (800) 962-5991, ext. 107.

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ADVICE OFFERED

Editor:

I would like to offer some advice to churches who are in the process of starting mission churches. Do not accept monetary assistance from the state convention or your local Baptist association without considering the potential impact on the mission church's autonomy.

There is a growing trend to place a clause in the deed to the property of newly established churches that if the respective church ever ceases to be a "participating" member of the applicable Baptist association or the Southern Baptist Convention, the property ownership will revert to the agency providing the monetary assistance.

We certainly want to discourage Southern Baptist churches from changing to any other denomination. However, this clause can prevent the respective church from borrowing money without permission from the agency which put the clause in the deed. This has happened at North Long Beach

Church, Long Beach, where I am a member.

We do not want to be anything but Southern Baptist. We have always been proud to be Southern Baptist and will continue to be Southern Baptist no matter what may happen—but as Southern Baptists don't we enjoy the autonomy to control our own finances? Have Southern Baptists established a hierarchy we must obey, as in other denominations? While we don't intend to change denominations, doesn't our local body of believers have the right to do so, if we feel God leading us?

If you start a mission, don't strangle that new church with such a restriction.

Larry McVey
Long Beach

SORRY FOR RESPONSE

Editor:

I am a United Methodist pastor in Walls. Please accept my apology for the response you have received from our bishop in the Northern Illinois

Conference, Bishop Sprague, (who) has been publicly critical of your denomination's plans to share the Good News with the people of Chicago this summer.

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (UMC) defines the mission of the Church by citing Matthew 28:19-20. How can we claim to be faithful to the Great Commission without sharing this Good News with those who have yet to hear? We must never forget that we are each descendants of people who once worshipped other gods.

May God bless that which he has so graciously called you to do.

David L. Newton, pastor
Minor Memorial UMC
Walls

SHOCKING SURVEY

Editor:

On Christmas Eve, I was preparing a devotion to share with my family before we opened the gifts that we had purchased for each other. I was sitting at my computer and decided to go and purchase some material from Focus on the Family bookstore. On their site that day they had a survey.

The question: When do you believe Jesus will return? (The responses were) in the next 1000 years: 12%; next 100 years:

23%; next 10 years: 30%; next year: 4%; never: 30%

Shocking, to say the least, that so many that call themselves Christians would doubt the return of our Savior. We all need to pray that their disbelief will be one of belief and faith.

Sam Higginbotham
Jackson

THANKS FOR CARS

Editor:

This past summer it became necessary for my wife and me to take a short leave of absence in the U.S. at our own expense. Thanks to the wonderful people of First Church, Long Beach, we were able to stay in a missionary apartment rent-free until we returned to the field. Thanks to Macedonian Call Foundation of Mississippi, we were provided transportation for the cost of insurance. If your church can be involved in a missionary apartment ministry or if you can donate a vehicle or money to purchase and maintain a vehicle, please know that your ministry is greatly needed and appreciated.

Charley & Okie Rempel
IMB Missionaries, Venezuela

Editor's note: The Macedonian Call Foundation of Mississippi can be contacted at P.O. Box 156, Ridgeland, MS 39158-0156. Telephone: (601) 956-7770.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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Focus on Jesus' power

Matthew 12:22-32, 38-40

By Lynn Jones

I heard of a vacuum cleaner salesman who called on a home in a desolate region of the country. In an effort to impress the lady of the house, he dumped some dirt on the floor. When she gasped, he assured her that this was no problem because his vacuum cleaner would easily remove the dirt. She replied, "Well, there is one problem—we don't have electricity."

With no source of power, the vacuum cleaner salesman had a major problem. With no source of power in our Christian lives, we have a major problem. Effective Christian ministries are carried out only in the power of God's

Spirit. We need to depend upon his power. We see that power demonstrated in the ministry of Jesus.

Transforming power (vv. 22-24). Jesus met a man who was demon possessed. This demon possession had resulted in the man's being blind and unable to speak. Some may have considered this a hopeless case, but not Jesus. Jesus cast the demon out with the result that the man could both speak and see. The bystanders were amazed at this transformation and expressed the hope that perhaps Jesus was the long-expected Messiah ("the son of David").

I have seen many people transformed by the power of

Jesus Christ. Every time that I witness this miracle of transformation it gives me a new determination to live and to witness with boldness and confidence.

Superior power (vv. 25-30). The Pharisees made the charge that Jesus had cast out the demon through the

power of Satan (Beelzebub). Jesus responded by stating that every kingdom, city, or house that has one faction fighting another within it will destroy itself. In the same way, if Satan were using Jesus to cast out demons, Satan would be fighting against himself, which made no sense.

In addition to that, the followers of the Pharisees ("your children") had the power, or claimed to have the power, to cast out demons. They believed this power came from God. The followers of the Pharisees would condemn their own masters on this point.

Jesus said that since he cast out demons by the power of the Spirit of God, it signaled the arrival of God's kingdom among them. In a one-verse parable, Jesus said that a person could not go into a strong man's house and take what belonged to him without first tying up the strong man. In the same way, Jesus could not take the demon-possessed man out of the control of Satan without first subduing Satan. Jesus concluded his response by saying that there is no neutral ground in the conflict between God and Satan.

Satan is a powerful force in our world today. We can be confident that we serve one who is stronger than Satan.

Restrained power (vv. 31-32). Jesus warned that opposing the Spirit's leadership is a very serious matter. There is no forgiveness when one persists in this course. While views differ on what this means, I believe that the sin for which there is no forgiveness is the

sin of refusing the Spirit's prompting to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When we reject the only way of salvation that God has provided, there is no forgiveness for that sin.

Resurrection power (v. 38-40). In spite of the fact that Jesus had just performed a great miracle, some of the religious leaders asked for a sign that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus responded by saying that the ultimate sign that he would give would be his resurrection. Jonah's temporary living death in the belly of the great fish which ended in his being delivered to life, was an illustration of what would happen to Jesus in his death and resurrection. This was Jesus' supreme display of his power.

We serve a God who comes off crosses and out of tombs. His power is unlimited. We can rely upon his power for successful Christian living.

Jones is pastor of First Church, Booneville.

LIFE AND WORK

Gifts to use

Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:1, 4-11

By Michael Jones

One of my favorite stories to read and use as an illustration is found in *How to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts* by John D. Hendrix (Convention Press 1979). In the introduction Hendrix tells a story of a boy who stumbled on a treasure in a field. He picked it up and ran his hands over it, carefully turning it and examining it, taking note of every fine detail. He listened to it intently but he could not determine what kind of treasure it might be.

He took it to show his friends and before long the entire town was talking about

it. So many people came to see the treasure that the boy had a glass case made to protect it. The newspaper ran articles on the treasure and people came from all over to see it. One man even offered to buy it, but the boy wouldn't sell it.

Over time the boy grew older and the treasure was not thought about much, until one day he noticed it was smaller. The color was the same and the shape was the same but the treasure was just smaller. He announced what was happening and once again people came to see. Everyone talked

about it but no one knew why it was shrinking. Finally, the treasure was forgotten and softly and quietly it slipped out of sight.

The story is about someone who has a gift but doesn't really understand the gift, never uses the gift, and eventually forgets about the gift. It

serves as a great introduction to the topic of spiritual gifts.

Many Christians have a gift and do not know it. Some who know it don't use it. The reason the treasure disappeared in the story was because it was meant to be used and it wasn't. The spiritual gifts God gives us as Christians are meant to be used. We have these gifts to use for a purpose. Let's take a look at what we need to know about our spiritual gifts so we can use them.

Understand the source and purpose of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:1, 4-7). The first thing we need to understand about spiritual gifts is the fact that they come from one source: God. It is God who gives the gifts and empowers the gifts. They operate under his authority. There are many gifts that God gives but they all come from him.

The second thing to understand is that these gifts are given for "the common good." What is the common good? It is the building up of the church. They are not for personal glory or gain, but for building up the church.

Recognize and appreciate the diversity of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-11). God gives all Christians gifts to use for the building up of the church. The text says, "Now to each one is given." This means we each have our own gift to offer.

God's design was and is for all of our gifts to work together. We must recognize this and appreciate each other's gifts. We must value the fact that all believers have gifts and they are diverse.

Use your gifts (Rom. 12:6-8). Paul is encouraging us here to use the gifts which God has given us for his service. We are to use these wholeheartedly. Peter, in 1 Peter 4:10-11, says we should use our gifts with all the power of God, giving it everything we have.

God has given each one of us gifts to use. Let me challenge you to examine your treasure from God. Explore it, listen to it, touch it, but use it. Don't put it under glass just to look at. That is not what it was intended for.

Jones is associate pastor/youth minister at Monticello Church, Monticello.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Perfecting love

1 John 4:7-21

By Carl M. White

Love is one of the great themes of the Bible. The first verse we teach children and new converts often is, "For God so loved the world..." (John 3:16). Among the Biblical writers, John gives the greatest emphasis to love. The Apostle Paul recognized that when it is all said and done in this life only three things matter; faith, hope, and love, and the greatest is love.

Source of love (vv. 7-8). Since the Word of God declares that God is love, then it is logical that he is the source of true love. Of course, not everything

that goes under the label of love is God's kind of love. A man says he loves pecan pie, but that is not the same as God's love for the man. Popular songs preach to listeners about love, but passionate, lustful human relationships are not the same thing as God's passionate desire to save us from our sins.

Evidence of knowing God is the presence of this love. When you meet someone who loves in a pure and selfless way, you have met someone who knows God.

Example of love (vv. 9-11). Discovery of the love of God is

experienced most clearly in the life of Christ, who is the ultimate example of love. Verse 9 says, "By this the love of God was manifested to us, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through him." (NASB)

When God became one of us on that first Christmas morning, it was the beginning of a masterful demonstration of the meaning of love. When Christ died on the old rugged Cross, it was the tragic consequence of that love. Then, when the stone was rolled away from the tomb and Christ appeared alive, it was the ultimate triumph of God's love.

John uses the word "propitiation" in verse 10. This is a powerful word that means the love of God compelled Christ

to die in our place, and to absorb in his own flesh the punishment we deserved. Paul expressed it a little differently when he said, "But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Perfecting of love (vv. 12-18). In verse 12, John says "if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us." The word translated *perfected* could be translated *matured*. It speaks not of an instantaneous transformation but of a process. When we attempt to love others as God would love them, it matures the love of God in us. In other words, if you want to know the love of God, love people in a godly way. When you fail at giving love, you also miss the experience of love.

Reasons to love (vv. 19-21).

The reason for love is simple: because he loved us first. We do not love others to earn God's love. We love others because of God's love.

The thing which separates Godly love from its many imitations is the motivation behind it. All other forms of love seek something in return. Thus, they are motivated by self-interest. "I'll love you if, or when."

God's love is motivated by gratitude. It is a response to what God has done for us. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant. The tension of that parable is that a man who has been forgiven so much could not forgive others. It is unthinkable.

Our failure to love one another is equally unthinkable in light of the Savior's love for us.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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During this past December, FBC McComb's PRIORITY Student Choir presented a dinner theatre entitled, "Twas the Last Mailing Day Before Christmas." All proceeds went to the Baptist Children's Village. The adult choir held a Christmas program and each night took a special offering. All donations from this offering went to the Baptist Children's Village as well. Pictured (from left) are Ronny Robinson, executive director, The Baptist Children's Village; Tony Martin, minister of education and administration, FBC, McComb; L. Lavon Gray, minister of music and media, FBC, McComb.

World's Baptists say 'Yes' to 21st-century

MELBOURNE, Australia (BP) — World Baptist delegates from all continents looked at a multitude of problems facing them in a new millennium — and nevertheless said, "Yes."

"Yes" was more than just part of the theme — "Jesus Christ Forever. Yes!" — of the 18th Baptist World Congress (BWC), Jan. 5-9 in Melbourne, Australia. It represented an overwhelming response by delegates to calls from world Baptist leaders to reach out in evangelism, heal racism and ethnic conflict, engage the power of prayer, minister to the hungry and poor, promote social justice, and encourage downcast, strife-torn people.

"The gospel of Jesus is an invitation" both to salvation and to a moral vision to minister to the needs of suffering people, H. Beecher Hicks Jr. of Washington, D.C., told some 7,000 participants in the opening night's keynote address.

"We are not here for a theological tea party.... Say 'yes' to the invitation," he charged, concluding with a litany of "yeses" in more than a dozen languages.

More than 6,100 registered delegates proceeded to say yes to Baptist World Alliance (BWA) plans for renewed efforts in evangelism, racial and social justice, and long-range vision for 21st-century ministry. The total registered was down from the 8,000-plus congress delegates in 1995 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Delegates also elected South Korean Billy Kim to a five-year term as 19th president of the BWA. Kim, pastor of Central Church, Suwon, South Korea, will succeed Brazilian pastor Nilson do Amaral Fanini in July at a meeting of the BWA General Council in Cuba.

In other elections, Audrey Morikawa of Canada succeeded Mercy Jeyarajao of India as president of the BWA Women's Department, while

Samson Ola Olaniyan of Nigeria succeeded Angel Baez of Paraguay as Men's Department president.

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz urged Baptists to take direct action over the

next 10 years to confront challenges ranging from refugees to racism to evangelism to Christian unity. "The new century brings with it many problems, sorrows, and challenges," Lotz said.

Lotz underscored support for a congress resolution calling for world Baptist bodies to make the first decade of the 21st century a "Decade for Racial Justice" to actively oppose "all forms of racism and ethnic conflict."

Congress participants also assented to resolutions for action on human rights and social justice, faith and hope for the new millennium, and Christian renewal, growth, evangelism and mission.

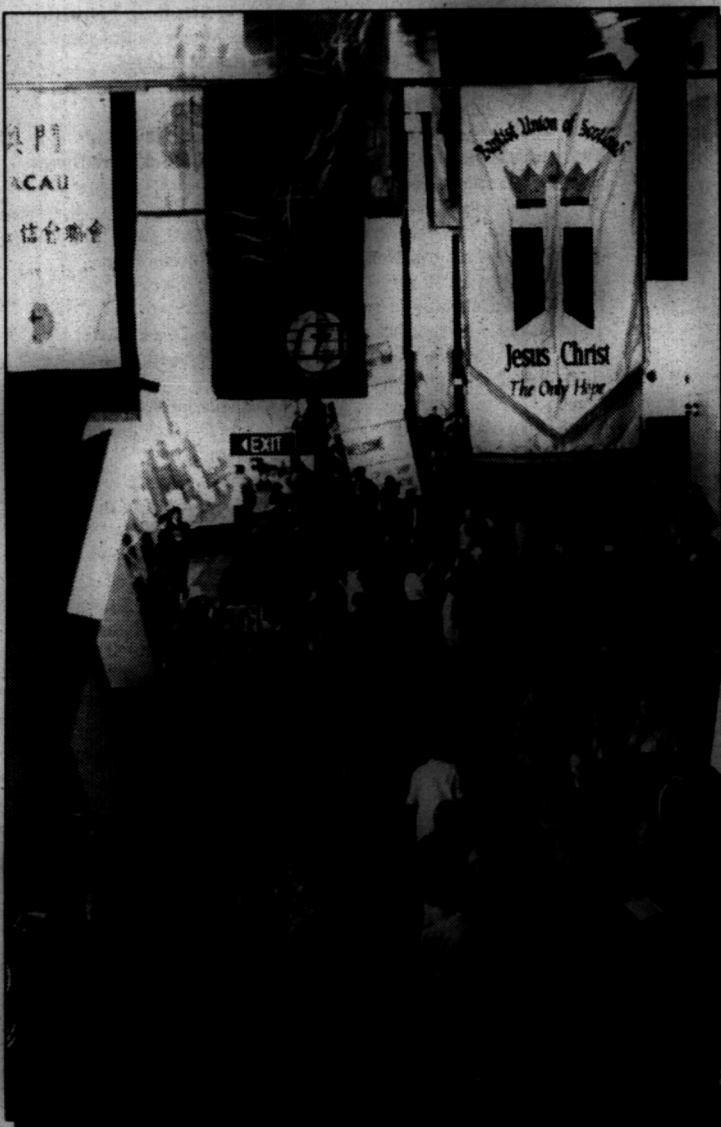
Lotz called for a summit among Baptist leaders over the next five years to "consider the challenge of evangelization in the new century" — especially among the newer churches of Africa and Asia and among 1.3 billion people living in unreached portions of the globe known as "World A" or the "10/40 Window."

Looking toward the 100th anniversary of the BWA, formed in 1905, Lotz urged a 21st Century Committee to "examine the achievements of the past, the present success, and the future possibilities" of the BWA, made up of 43 million baptized believers in 160,000 churches in 196 Baptist bodies.

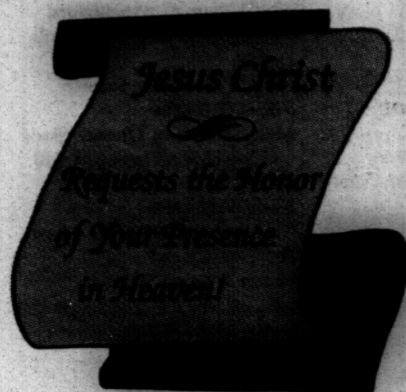
That committee will bring recommendations for changes and emphases to the Centennial Baptist World Congress in England in 2005, said Lotz, BWA general secretary since 1988.

Christians enter a new millennium divided, he said. "Division between Catholic, Orthodox, ecumenical, and evangelical Christians is in some cases worse than at the beginning of the 20th century. Baptists must work for the unity of God's people."

Congress speakers and group leaders focused the multicultural Baptists on ways "to seek the mind of Christ" and minister in unity.



BAPTISTS GATHER — Banners denoting the conventions of Baptists from nations all around the world are displayed in a colorful opening celebration of the 18th Baptist World Congress in Melbourne, Australia, Jan. 5-9. (BWA photo by Jim Veneman)



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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MHHZ IVXNPHGKHP SC
EWH GVKH VR TVO,
GVVMSCT RVN EWH
DHNLI VR VXN GVNO
UHPXP LWNSE XCEV
HEHNCBG GSRH.

UXOH EYHCEI-VCH

Clue: U = J

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Six: Sixty-Five.

Bangladesh Baptists express concerns about IMB

MELBOURNE, Australia (BP) — The mission strategy of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) International Mission Board (IMB) unexpectedly became a topic of discussion Jan. 8 at the General Council meeting of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) in Melbourne, Australia.

During a miscellaneous business session, Dilip Datta of Bangladesh rose to ask the BWA to begin what he termed a "capacity building" program.

Datta said an unnamed mission society was "dumping its institutions on us." He said the mission society had never trained Bangladesh Baptists to manage hospitals or other institutions. "That is why we are turning to you," he told BWA General Council members. "We need your help to train us to run the institutions for which we are now responsible."

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz then asked Samson Chowdhury, a member of the General Council from Bangladesh, if he wanted to respond to the unexpected request made by his fellow countryman.

Chowdhury, a leading businessman, was more pointed, naming missionaries of the SBC as the point of concern. He recounted the contributions of Southern Baptists in Bangladesh, crediting missionaries with a major role in the growth of churches from 17 in 1982 to more than 450 now. "By the time we have our annual meeting in March, we will have more than 500 churches," he predicted. He said the assistance of SBC missionaries contributed to the growth.

"Now the missionaries have a new vision, but we do not know what that vision is," Chowdhury continued. He said missionaries were withdrawing from working with the Baptist Christians of his country. "The missionaries believe that to reach Muslims they have to grow beards, look like Muslims and act like Muslims. They do not want to identify with the churches."

Chowdhury said in the long run the policy may be good for Baptists in Bangladesh. "We will have to learn to depend on ourselves," he said, but in the meantime they feel abandoned.

That is why they have turned to the BWA for assistance, he explained.

BWA President Nilson Fanini referred the request to the General Council executive committee where, he assured the Bangladesh representatives, it would be considered openly and in a spirit of friendship.

Lotz asked that the International Mission (Agency) Secretaries also discuss the issue. IMB President Jerry Rankin is a member of that body.

Following the meeting, Avery Willis, a vice president of the SBC International Mission Board, said he was surprised to hear the concern raised before the BWA General Council. However, he said some other groups of Baptists had expressed feelings similar to those of the two men from Bangladesh. Willis said he and Rankin were planning to visit national leaders during the coming year.

"We want them [the national leaders] to know that we are not abandoning them. We want to maintain relationships," he said.

Shortly after the General

Council adjourned, Willis met with the Bangladesh men and scheduled a private meeting for additional discussion.

In other action by the council, members affirmed the appointment of several committees and commissions by President-elect Billy Kim and Lotz; approved a motion by James T. Draper Jr., president of the SBC LifeWay Christian Resources, to make a July 3-9 meeting in Cuba a full General Council meeting; approved a financing package of \$3.3 million for the new office of the BWA which includes \$500,000 for renovation.

The BWA hopes to sell the present property in McLean, Va., USA, for \$2 million and raise the additional \$1.3 million. The new property is located in nearby Falls Church, Va.

Council members also re-elected the five regional secretaries and approved a 4% salary adjustment for them.

The General Council is composed of 196 member bodies with more than 500 people, including commissions, committees and staff, who attend council meetings.